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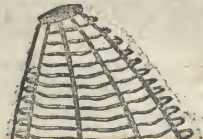
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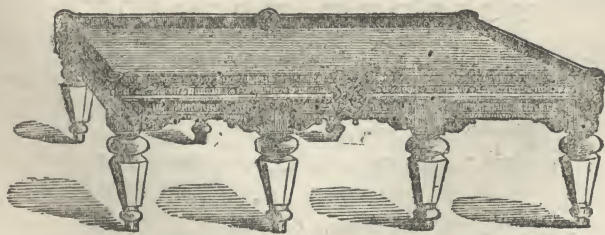
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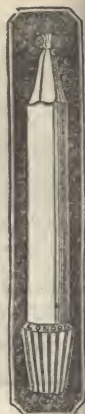
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Dessert Spoons	1 0 0	1 10 0	1 15 0	1 15 0	1 15 0	1 15 0
Tea Spoons	0 12 0	0 18 0	1 3 6	1 3 6	1 3 6	1 3 6

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12 Dessert Forks	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Dessert Spoons	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Tea Spoons	16 0	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 5 0
6 Egg Spoons, } gilt bowls. }	10 0	12 0	12 0	13 6
2 Sauce Ladles	6 0	8 0	8 0	9 0
1 Gravy Spoon	6 6	9 0	10 0	11 0
2 Salt Spoons, } gilt bowls. }	3 4	4 0	4 0	4 6
1 Mustard Spoon, } gilt bowl. }	1 8	2 0	2 0	2 3
1 Pair Sugar Tongs	2 6	3 6	3 6	4 0
1 Pair Fish Carvers	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 10 0	1 10 0
1 Butter Knife	2 6	4 0	5 6	6 0
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BONE AND HORN HANDLES.			
Knives and Forks per dozen.			
White bone handles	11 0	8 6	2 0
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Do., very strong riveted hdl's.	12 0	9 0	3 0

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ESTABLISHED 1820.

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MISS RIDERHOOD AT HOME.



MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.



CHAPTER XI.

SOME AFFAIRS OF THE HEART.

LITTLE Miss Peecher, from her little official dwelling-house, with its little windows like the eyes in needles, and its little doors like the covers of school-books, was very observant indeed of the object of her quiet affections. Love, though said to be afflicted with blindness, is a vigilant watchman, and Miss Peecher kept him on double duty over Mr. Bradley Headstone. It was not that she was naturally given to playing the spy—it was not that she was at all secret, plotting, or mean—it was simply that she loved the irresponsive Bradley with all the primitive and homely stock of love that had never been examined or certificated out of her. If her faithful slate had had the latent qualities of sympathetic paper, and its pencil those of invisible ink, many a little treatise calculated to astonish the pupils would have come bursting through the dry sums in school-time under the warming influence of Miss Peecher's bosom. For, oftentimes when school was not, and her calm leisure and calm little house were her own, Miss Peecher would commit to the confidential slate an imaginary description of how, upon a balmy evening at dusk, two figures might have been observed in the market-garden ground round the corner, of whom one, being a manly form, bent over the other, being a womanly form of short stature and some compactness, and breathed in a low voice the words, "Emma Peecher, wilt thou be my own?" after which the womanly form's head reposed upon the manly form's shoulder, and the nightingales tuned up. Though all unseen, and unsuspected by the pupils, Bradley Headstone even pervaded the school exercises. Was Geography in question? He would come triumphantly flying out of Vesuvius and Ætna ahead of the lava, and would boil unharmed in the hot springs of Iceland, and would float majestically down the Ganges and the Nile. Did History chronicle a king of men? Behold him in pepper-and-salt pantaloons, with his watch-guard round his neck. Were copies to be written? In capital B's and H's most of the girls under Miss Peecher's tuition were half a year ahead of every other letter in the alphabet. And Mental Arithmetic, administered by Miss Peecher, often devoted itself to providing Bradley Headstone with a wardrobe of fabulous extent: fourscore and four neck-ties at two and ninepence-halfpenny, two gross of silver watches at four pounds fifteen and sixpence, seventy-four black hats at eighteen shillings; and many similar superfluities.

The vigilant watchman, using his daily opportunities of turning his eyes in Bradley's direction, soon apprized Miss Peecher that Bradley was more preoccupied than had been his wont, and more given to strolling about with a downcast and reserved face, turning something difficult in his mind that was not in the scholastic syllabus. Putting this and that together—combining under the head

"this," present appearances and the intimacy with Charley Hexam, and ranging under the head "that" the visit to his sister, the watchman reported to Miss Peecher his strong suspicions that the sister was at the bottom of it.

"I wonder," said Miss Peecher, as she sat making up her weekly report on a half-holiday afternoon, "what they call Hexam's sister?"

Mary Anne, at her needlework, attendant and attentive, held her arm up.

"Well, Mary Anne?"

"She is named Lizzie, ma'am."

"She can hardly be named Lizzie, I think, Mary Anne," returned Miss Peecher, in a tunefully instructive voice. "Is Lizzie a Christian name, Mary Anne?"

Mary Anne laid down her work, rose, hooked herself behind, as being under catechization, and replied: "No, it is a corruption, Miss Peecher."

"Who gave her that name?" Miss Peecher was going on, from the mere force of habit, when she checked herself, on Mary Anne's evincing theological impatience to strike in with her godfathers and her godmothers, and said: "I mean of what name is it a corruption?"

"Elizabeth, or Eliza, Miss Peecher."

"Right, Mary Anne. Whether there were any Lizzies in the early Christian Church must be considered very doubtful, very doubtful." Miss Peecher was exceedingly sage here. "Speaking correctly, we say, then, that Hexam's sister is called Lizzie; not that she is named so. Do we not, Mary Anne?"

"We do, Miss Peecher."

"And where," pursued Miss Peecher, complacent in her little transparent fiction of conducting the examination in a semi-official manner for Mary Anne's benefit, not her own, "where does this young woman, who is called but not named Lizzie, live? Think, now, before answering."

"In Church Street, Smith Square, by Mill Bank, ma'am."

"In Church Street, Smith Square, by Mill Bank," repeated Miss Peecher, as if possessed beforehand of the book in which it was written. "Exactly so. And what occupation does this young woman pursue, Mary Anne? Take time."

"She has a place of trust at an outfitter's in the City, ma'am."

"Oh!" said Miss Peecher, pondering on it; but smoothly added, in a confirmatory tone, "At an outfitter's in the City. Ye-es?"

"And Charley——" Mary Anne was proceeding, when Miss Peecher stared.

"I mean Hexam, Miss Peecher."

"I should think you did, Mary Anne. I am glad to hear you do. And Hexam——?"

"Says," Mary Anne went on, "that he is not pleased with his sister, and that his sister won't be guided by his advice, and persists in being guided by somebody else's; and that——"

"Mr. Headstone coming across the garden!" exclaimed Miss Peecher, with a flushed glance at the looking-glass. "You have

answered very well, Mary Anne. You are forming an excellent habit of arranging your thoughts clearly. That will do."

The discreet Mary Anne resumed her seat and her silence, and stitched, and stitched, and was stitching when the schoolmaster's shadow came in before him, announcing that he might be instantly expected.

"Good evening, Miss Peecher," he said, pursuing the shadow, and taking its place.

"Good evening, Mr. Headstone. Mary Anne, a chair."

"Thank you," said Bradley, seating himself in his constrained manner. "This is but a flying visit. I have looked in, on my way, to ask a kindness of you as a neighbour."

"Did you say on your way, Mr. Headstone?" asked Miss Peecher.

"On my way to—where I am going."

"Church Street, Smith Square, by Mill Bank," repeated Miss Peecher, in her own thoughts.

"Charley Hexam has gone to get a book or two he wants, and will probably be back before me. As we leave my house empty, I took the liberty of telling him I would leave the key here. Would you kindly allow me to do so?"

"Certainly, Mr. Headstone. Going for an evening walk, sir?"

"Partly for a walk, and partly for—on business."

"Business in Church Street, Smith Square, by Mill Bank," repeated Miss Peecher to herself.

"Having said which," pursued Bradley, laying his door-key on the table, "I must be already going. There is nothing I can do for you, Miss Peecher?"

"Thank you, Mr. Headstone. In which direction?"

"In the direction of Westminster."

"Mill Bank," Miss Peecher repeated in her own thoughts once again. "No, thank you, Mr. Headstone; I'll not trouble you."

"You couldn't trouble me," said the schoolmaster.

"Ah!" returned Miss Peecher, though not aloud; "but you can trouble me!" And for all her quiet manner, and her quiet smile, she was full of trouble as he went his way.

She was right touching his destination. He held as straight a course for the house of the dolls' dressmaker as the wisdom of his ancestors, exemplified in the construction of the intervening streets, would let him, and walked with a bent head hammering at one fixed idea. It had been an immovable idea since he first set eyes upon her. It seemed to him as if all that he could suppress in himself he had suppressed, as if all that he could restrain in himself he had restrained, and the time had come—in a rush, in a moment—when the power of self-command had departed from him. Love at first sight is a trite expression quite sufficiently discussed; enough that in certain smouldering natures like this man's, that passion leaps into a blaze, and makes such head as fire does in a rage of wind, when other passions, but for its mastery, could be held in chains. As a multitude of weak, imitative natures are always lying by, ready to go mad upon the next wrong idea that may be broached—in these times, generally some form of tribute to Somebody for something

that never was done, or, if ever done, that was done by Somebody Else—so these less ordinary natures may lie by for years, ready on the touch of an instant to burst into flame.

The schoolmaster went his way, brooding and brooding, and a sense of being vanquished in a struggle might have been pieced out of his worried face. Truly, in his breast there lingered a resentful shame to find himself defeated by this passion for Charley Hexam's sister, though in the very self-same moments he was concentrating himself upon the object of bringing the passion to a successful issue.

He appeared before the dolls' dressmaker, sitting alone at her work. "Oho!" thought that sharp young personage, "it's you, is it? I know your tricks and your manners, my friend!"

"Hexam's sister," said Bradley Headstone, "is not come home yet?"

"You are quite a conjuror," returned Miss Wren.

"I will wait, if you please, for I want to speak to her."

"Do you?" returned Miss Wren. "Sit down. I hope it's mutual."

Bradley glanced distrustfully at the shrewd face again bending over the work, and said, trying to conquer doubt and hesitation:

"I hope you don't imply that my visit will be unacceptable to Hexam's sister?"

"There! Don't call her that. I can't bear you to call her that," returned Miss Wren, snapping her fingers in a volley of impatient snaps, "for I don't like Hexam."

"Indeed?"

"No." Miss Wren wrinkled her nose, to express dislike. "Selfish. Thinks only of himself. The way with all of you."

"The way with all of us? Then you don't like *me*?"

"So-so," replied Miss Wren, with a shrug and a laugh. "Don't know much about you."

"But I was not aware it was the way with all of us," said Bradley, returning to the accusation, a little injured. "Won't you say, some of us?"

"Meaning," returned the little creature, "every one of you, but you. Hah! Now look this lady in the face. This is Mrs. Truth. The Honorable. Full-dressed."

Bradley glanced at the doll she held up for his observation—which had been lying on its face on her bench, while with a needle and thread she fastened the dress on at the back—and looked from it to her.

"I stand the Honorable Mrs. T. on my bench in this corner against the wall, where her blue eyes can shine upon you," pursued Miss Wren, doing so, and making two little dabs at him in the air with her needle, as if she pricked him with it in his own eyes; "and I defy you to tell me, with Mrs. T. for a witness, what you have come here for."

"To see Hexam's sister."

"You don't say so!" retorted Miss Wren, hitching her chin. "But on whose account?"

"Her own."

"O Mrs. T.!" exclaimed Miss Wren. "You hear him!"

"To reason with her," pursued Bradley, half humouring what was

present, and half angry with what was not present; "for her own sake."

"Oh Mrs. T.!" exclaimed the dressmaker.

"For her own sake," repeated Bradley, warming, "and for her brother's, and as a perfectly disinterested person."

"Really, Mrs. T.," remarked the dressmaker, "since it comes to this, we must positively turn you with your face to the wall." She had hardly done so, when Lizzie Hexam arrived, and showed some surprise on seeing Bradley Headstone there, and Jenny shaking her little fist at him close before her eyes, and the Honorable Mrs. T. with her face to the wall.

"Here's a perfectly disinterested person, Lizzie dear," said the knowing Miss Wren, "come to talk with you, for your own sake and your brother's. Think of that. I am sure there ought to be no third party present at anything so very kind and so very serious; and so, if you'll remove the third party upstairs, my dear, the third party will retire."

Lizzie took the hand which the dolls' dressmaker held out to her for the purpose of being supported away, but only looked at her with an inquiring smile, and made no other movement.

"The third party hobbles awfully, you know, when she's left to herself," said Miss Wren, "her back being so bad, and her legs so queer; so she can't retire gracefully unless you help her, Lizzie."

"She can do no better than stay where she is," returned Lizzie, releasing the hand, and laying her own lightly on Miss Jenny's curls. And then to Bradley: "From Charley, sir?"

In an irresolute way, and stealing a clumsy look at her, Bradley rose to place a chair for her, and then returned to his own.

"Strictly speaking," said he, "I come from Charley, because I left him only a little while ago; but I am not commissioned by Charley. I come of my own spontaneous act."

With her elbows on her bench, and her chin upon her hands, Miss Jenny Wren sat looking at him with a watchful sidelong look. Lizzie, in her different way, sat looking at him too.

"The fact is," began Bradley, with a mouth so dry that he had some difficulty in articulating his words: the consciousness of which rendered his manner still more ungainly and undecided; "the truth is, that Charley, having no secrets from me (to the best of my belief), has confided the whole of this matter to me."

He came to a stop, and Lizzie asked: "What matter, sir?"

"I thought," returned the schoolmaster, stealing another look at her, and seeming to try in vain to sustain it; for the look dropped as it lighted on her eyes, "that it might be so superfluous as to be almost impertinent, to enter upon a definition of it. My allusion was to this matter of your having put aside your brother's plans for you, and given the preference to those of Mr.—I believe the name is Mr. Eugene Wrayburn."

He made this point of not being certain of the name, with another uneasy look at her, which dropped like the last.

Nothing being said on the other side, he had to begin again, and began with new embarrassment.

"Your brother's plans were communicated to me when he first had them in his thoughts. In point of fact he spoke to me about them when I was last here—when we were walking back together, and when I—when the impression was fresh upon me of having seen his sister."

There might have been no meaning in it, but the little dress-maker here removed one of her supporting hands from her chin, and musingly turned the Honorable Mrs. T. with her face to the company. That done, she fell into her former attitude.

"I approved of his idea," said Bradley, with his uneasy look wandering to the doll, and unconsciously resting there longer than it had rested on Lizzie, "both because your brother ought naturally to be the originator of any such scheme, and because I hoped to be able to promote it. I should have had inexpressible pleasure, I should have taken inexpressible interest, in promoting it. Therefore I must acknowledge that when your brother was disappointed, I too was disappointed. I wish to avoid reservation or concealment, and I fully acknowledge that."

He appeared to have encouraged himself by having got so far. At all events he went on with much greater firmness and force of emphasis: though with a curious disposition to set his teeth, and with a curious tight-screwing movement of his right hand in the clenching palm of his left, like the action of one who was being physically hurt, and was unwilling to cry out.

"I am a man of strong feelings, and I have strongly felt this disappointment. I do strongly feel it. I don't show what I feel; some of us are obliged habitually to keep it down. To keep it down. But to return to your brother. He has taken the matter so much to heart that he has remonstrated (in my presence he remonstrated) with Mr. Eugene Wrayburn, if that be the name. He did so, quite ineffectually. As any one not blinded to the real character of Mr. —Mr. Eugene Wrayburn—would readily suppose."

He looked at Lizzie again, and held the look. And his face turned from burning red to white, and from white back to burning red, and so for the time to lasting deadly white.

"Finally, I resolved to come here alone, and appeal to you. I resolved to come here alone, and entreat you to retract the course you have chosen, and instead of confiding in a mere stranger—a person of most insolent behaviour to your brother and others—to prefer your brother and your brother's friend."

Lizzie Hexam had changed colour when those changes came over him, and her face now expressed some anger, more dislike, and even a touch of fear. But she answered him very steadily.

"I cannot doubt, Mr. Headstone, that your visit is well meant. You have been so good a friend to Charley that I have no right to doubt it. I have nothing to tell Charley, but that I accepted the help to which he so much objects before he made any plans for me; or certainly before I knew of any. It was considerably and delicately offered, and there were reasons that had weight with me which should be as dear to Charley as to me. I have no more to say to Charley on this subject."

His lips trembled and stood apart, as he followed this repudiation of himself, and limitation of her words to her brother.

"I should have told Charley, if he had come to me," she resumed, as though it were an after-thought, "that Jenny and I find our teacher very able and very patient, and that she takes great pains with us. So much so, that we have said to her we hope in a very little while to be able to go on by ourselves. Charley knows about teachers, and I should also have told him, for his satisfaction, that ours comes from an institution where teachers are regularly brought up."

"I should like to ask you," said Bradley Headstone, grinding his words slowly out, as though they came from a rusty mill; "I should like to ask you, if I may without offence, whether you would have objected—no; rather, I should like to say, if I may without offence, that I wish I had had the opportunity of coming here with your brother and devoting my poor abilities and experience to your service."

"Thank you, Mr. Headstone."

"But I fear," he pursued, after a pause, furtively wrenching at the seat of his chair with one hand, as if he would have wrenched the chair to pieces, and gloomily observing her while her eyes were cast down, "that my humble services would not have found much favor with you?"

She made no reply, and the poor stricken wretch sat contending with himself in a heat of passion and torment. After a while he took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead and hands.

"There is only one thing more I had to say, but it is the most important. There is a reason against this matter, there is a personal relation concerned in this matter, not yet explained to you. It might—I don't say it would—it might—induce you to think differently. To proceed under the present circumstances is out of the question. Will you please come to the understanding that there shall be another interview on the subject?"

"With Charley, Mr. Headstone?"

"With—well," he answered, breaking off, "yes! Say with him too. Will you please come to the understanding that there must be another interview under more favorable circumstances, before the whole case can be submitted?"

"I don't," said Lizzie, shaking her head, "understand your meaning, Mr. Headstone."

"Limit my meaning for the present," he interrupted, "to the whole case being submitted to you in another interview."

"What case, Mr. Headstone? What is wanting to it?"

"You—you shall be informed in the other interview." Then he said, as if in a burst of irrepressible despair, "I—I leave it all incomplete! There is a spell upon me, I think!" And then added, almost as if he asked for pity, "Good-night!"

He held out his hand. As she, with manifest hesitation, not to say reluctance, touched it, a strange tremble passed over him, and his face, so deadly white, was moved as by a stroke of pain. Then he was gone.

The dolls' dressmaker sat with her attitude unchanged, eyeing the door by which he had departed, until Lizzie pushed her bench aside and sat down near her. Then, eyeing Lizzie as she had previously eyed Bradley and the door, Miss Wren chopped that very sudden and keen chop in which her jaws sometimes indulged, leaned back in her chair with folded arms, and thus expressed herself:

"Humph! If he—I mean, of course, my dear, the party who is coming to court me when the time comes—should be *that* sort of man, he may spare himself the trouble. *He* wouldn't do to be trotted about and made useful. He'd take fire and blow up while he was about it."

"And so you would be rid of him," said Lizzie, humouring her.

"Not so easily," returned Miss Wren. "He wouldn't blow up alone. He'd carry me up with him. I know his tricks and his manners."

"Would he want to hurt you, do you mean?" asked Lizzie.

"Mightn't exactly want to do it, my dear," returned Miss Wren; "but a lot of gunpowder among lighted lucifer-matches in the next room might almost as well be here."

"He is a very strange man," said Lizzie, thoughtfully.

"I wish he was so very strange a man as to be a total stranger," answered the sharp little thing.

It being Lizzie's regular occupation when they were alone of an evening to brush out and smooth the long fair hair of the dolls' dressmaker, she unfastened a ribbon that kept it back while the little creature was at her work, and it fell in a beautiful shower over the poor shoulders that were much in need of such adorning rain. "Not now, Lizzie, dear," said Jenny; "let us have a talk by the fire." With those words, she in her turn loosened her friend's dark hair, and it dropped of its own weight over her bosom, in two rich masses. Pretending to compare the colours and admire the contrast, Jenny so managed a mere touch or two of her nimble hands, as that she herself laying a cheek on one of the dark folds, seemed blinded by her own clustering curls to all but the fire, while the fine handsome face and brow of Lizzie were revealed without obstruction in the sober light.

"Let us have a talk," said Jenny, "about Mr. Eugene Wrayburn."

Something sparkled down among the fair hair resting on the dark hair; and if it were not a star—which it couldn't be—it was an eye; and if it were an eye, it was Jenny Wren's eye, bright and watchful as the bird's whose name she had taken.

"Why about Mr. Wrayburn?" Lizzie asked.

"For no better reason than because I'm in the humour. I wonder whether he's rich!"

"No, not rich."

"Poor?"

"I think so, for a gentleman."

"Ah! To be sure! Yes, he's a gentleman. Not of our sort; is he?"

A shake of the head, a thoughtful shake of the head, and the answer, softly spoken, "Oh no, oh no!"

The dolls' dressmaker had an arm round her friend's waist. Ad-

justing the arm, she slyly took the opportunity of blowing at her own hair where it fell over her face; then the eye down there, under lighter shadows sparkled more brightly and appeared more watchful.

"When He turns up, he shan't be a gentleman; I'll very soon send him packing, if he is. However, he's not Mr. Wrayburn; I haven't captivated *him*. I wonder whether anybody has, Lizzie!"

"It is very likely."

"Is it very likely? I wonder who!"

"Is it not very likely that some lady has been taken by him, and that he may love her dearly?"

"Perhaps. I don't know. What would you think of him, Lizzie, if you were a lady?"

"I a lady!" she repeated, laughing. "Such a fancy!"

"Yes. But say: just as a fancy, and for instance."

"I a lady! I, a poor girl who used to row poor father on the river. I, who had rowed poor father out and home on the very night when I saw him for the first time. I, who was made so timid by his looking at me, that I got up and went out!"

("He did look at you, even that night, though you were not a lady!" thought Miss Wren.)

"I a lady!" Lizzie went on in a low voice, with her eyes upon the fire. "I, with poor father's grave not even cleared of undeserved stain and shame, and he trying to clear it for me! I a lady!"

"Only as a fancy, and for instance," urged Miss Wren.

"Too much, Jenny, dear, too much! My fancy is not able to get that far." As the low fire gleamed upon her, it showed her smiling, mournfully and abstractedly.

"But I am in the humour, and I must be humoured, Lizzie, because after all I am a poor little thing, and have had a hard day with my bad child. Look in the fire, as I like to hear you tell how you used to do when you lived in that dreary old house that had once been a windmill. Look in the—what was its name when you told fortunes with your brother that I *don't* like?"

"The hollow down by the flare?"

"Ah! That's the name! You can find a lady there, I know."

"More easily than I can make one of such material as myself, Jenny."

The sparkling eye looked stedfastly up, as the musing face looked thoughtfully down. "Well?" said the dolls' dressmaker, "We have found our lady?"

Lizzie nodded, and asked, "Shall she be rich?"

"She had better be, as he's poor."

"She is very rich. Shall she be handsome?"

"Even you can be that, Lizzie, so she ought to be."

"She is very handsome."

"What does she say about him?" asked Miss Jenny, in a low voice: watchful, through an intervening silence, of the face looking down at the fire.

"She is glad, glad, to be rich, that he may have the money. She is glad, glad, to be beautiful, that he may be proud of her. Her poor heart——"

"Eh? Her poor heart?" said Miss Wren.

"Her heart—is given him, with all its love and truth. She would joyfully die with him, or, better than that, die for him. She knows he has failings, but she thinks they have grown up through his being like one cast away, for the want of something to trust in, and care for, and think well of. And she says, that lady rich and beautiful that I can never come near, 'Only put me in that empty place, only try how little I mind myself, only prove what a world of things I will do and bear for you, and I hope that you might even come to be much better than you are, through me who am so much worse, and hardly worth the thinking of beside you.'"

As the face looking at the fire had become exalted and forgetful in the rapture of these words, the little creature, openly clearing away her fair hair with her disengaged hand, had gazed at it with earnest attention and something like alarm. Now that the speaker ceased, the little creature laid down her head again, and moaned, "O me, O me, O me!"

"In pain, dear Jenny?" asked Lizzie, as if awakened.

"Yes, but not the old pain. Lay me down, lay me down. Don't go out of my sight to-night. Lock the door and keep close to me." Then turning away her face, she said in a whisper to herself, "My Lizzie, my poor Lizzie! O my blessed children, come back in the long bright slanting rows, and come for her, not me. She wants help more than I, my blessed children!"

She had stretched her hands up with that higher and better look, and now she turned again, and folded them round Lizzie's neck, and rocked herself on Lizzie's breast.

CHAPTER XII.

MORE BIRDS OF PREY.

ROGUE RIDERHOOD dwelt deep and dark in Limehouse Hole, among the riggers, and the mast, oar and block makers, and the boat-builders, and the sail-lofts, as in a kind of ship's hold stored full of waterside characters, some no better than himself, some very much better, and none much worse. The Hole, albeit in a general way not over nice in its choice of company, was rather shy in reference to the honor of cultivating the Rogue's acquaintance; more frequently giving him the cold shoulder than the warm hand, and seldom or never drinking with him unless at his own expense. A part of the Hole, indeed, contained so much public spirit and private virtue that not even this strong leverage could move it to good fellowship with a tainted accuser. But, there may have been the drawback on this magnanimous morality, that its exponents held a true witness before Justice to be the next unneighbourly and accursed character to a false one.

Had it not been for the daughter whom he often mentioned, Mr. Riderhood might have found the Hole a mere grave as to any means

it would yield him of getting a living. But Miss Pleasant Riderhood had some little position and connection in Limehouse Hole. Upon the smallest of small scales, she was an unlicensed pawnbroker, keeping what was popularly called a Leaving Shop, by lending insignificant sums on insignificant articles of property deposited with her as security. In her four-and-twentieth year of life, Pleasant was already in her fifth year of this way of trade. Her deceased mother had established the business, and on that parent's demise she had appropriated a secret capital of fifteen shillings to establishing herself in it; the existence of such capital in a pillow being the last intelligible confidential communication made to her by the departed, before succumbing to dropsical conditions of snuff and gin, incompatible equally with coherence and existence.

Why christened Pleasant, the late Mrs. Riderhood might possibly have been at some time able to explain, and possibly not. Her daughter had no information on that point. Pleasant she found herself, and she couldn't help it. She had not been consulted on the question, any more than on the question of her coming into these terrestrial parts, to want a name. Similarly, she found herself possessed of what is colloquially termed a swivel eye (derived from her father), which she might perhaps have declined if her sentiments on the subject had been taken. She was not otherwise positively ill-looking, though anxious, meagre, of a muddy complexion, and looking as old again as she really was.

As some dogs have it in the blood, or are trained, to worry certain creatures to a certain point, so—not to make the comparison disrespectfully—Pleasant Riderhood had it in the blood, or had been trained, to regard seamen, within certain limits, as her prey. Show her a man in a blue jacket, and, figuratively speaking, she pinned him instantly. Yet, all things considered, she was not of an evil mind or an unkindly disposition. For, observe how many things were to be considered according to her own unfortunate experience. Show Pleasant Riderhood a Wedding in the street, and she only saw two people taking out a regular license to quarrel and fight. Show her a Christening, and she saw a little heathen personage having a quite superfluous name bestowed upon it, inasmuch as it would be commonly addressed by some abusive epithet: which little personage was not in the least wanted by anybody, and would be shoved and banged out of everybody's way, until it should grow big enough to shove and bang. Show her a Funeral, and she saw an unremunerative ceremony in the nature of a black masquerade, conferring a temporary gentility on the performers, at an immense expense, and representing the only formal party ever given by the deceased. Show her a live father, and she saw but a duplicate of her own father, who from her infancy had been taken with fits and starts of discharging his duty to her, which duty was always incorporated in the form of a fist or a leathern strap, and being discharged hurt her. All things considered, therefore, Pleasant Riderhood was not so very, very bad. There was even a touch of romance in her—of such romance as could creep into Limehouse Hole—and maybe sometimes of a summer evening, when she stood with folded arms at her shop-

door, looking from the reeking street to the sky where the sun was setting, she may have had some vaporous visions of far-off islands in the southern seas or elsewhere (not being geographically particular), where it would be good to roam with a congenial partner among groves of bread-fruit, waiting for ships to be wafted from the hollow ports of civilization. For, sailors to be got the better of, were essential to Miss Pleasant's Eden.

Not on a summer evening did she come to her little shop-door, when a certain man standing over against the house on the opposite side of the street took notice of her. That was on a cold shrewd windy evening, after dark. Pleasant Riderhood shared with most of the lady inhabitants of the Hole, the peculiarity that her hair was a ragged knot, constantly coming down behind, and that she never could enter upon any undertaking without first twisting it into place. At that particular moment, being newly come to the threshold to take a look out of doors, she was winding herself up with both hands after this fashion. And so prevalent was the fashion, that on the occasion of a fight or other disturbance in the Hole, the ladies would be seen flocking from all quarters universally twisting their back-hair as they came along, and many of them, in the hurry of the moment, carrying their back-combs in their mouths.

It was a wretched little shop, with a roof that any man standing in it could touch with his hand; little better than a cellar or cave, down three steps. Yet in its ill-lighted window, among a flaring handkerchief or two, an old peacoat or so, a few valueless watches and compasses, a jar of tobacco and two crossed pipes, a bottle of walnut ketchup, and some horrible sweets—these creature discomforts serving as a blind to the main business of the Leaving Shop—was displayed the inscription SEAMAN'S BOARDING-HOUSE.

Taking notice of Pleasant Riderhood at the door, the man crossed so quickly that she was still winding herself up, when he stood close before her.

"Is your father at home?" said he.

"I think he is," returned Pleasant, dropping her arms; "come in."

It was a tentative reply, the man having a seafaring appearance. Her father was not at home, and Pleasant knew it. "Take a seat by the fire," were her hospitable words when she had got him in; "men of your calling are always welcome here."

"Thankee," said the man.

His manner was the manner of a sailor, and his hands were the hands of a sailor, except that they were smooth. Pleasant had an eye for sailors, and she noticed the unused colour and texture of the hands, sunburnt though they were, as sharply as she noticed their unmistakable looseness and suppleness, as he sat himself down with his left arm carelessly thrown across his left leg a little above the knee, and the right arm as carelessly thrown over the elbow of the wooden chair, with the hand curved, half open and half shut, as if it had just let go a rope.

"Might you be looking for a Boarding-House?" Pleasant inquired, taking her observant stand on one side of the fire.

"I don't rightly know my plans yet," returned the man.

"You ain't looking for a Leaving Shop?"

"No," said the man.

"No," assented Pleasant, "you've got too much of an outfit on you for that. But if you should want either, this is both."

"Ay, ay!" said the man, glancing round the place. "I know. I've been here before."

"Did you Leave anything when you were here before?" asked Pleasant, with a view to principal and interest.

"No." The man shook his head.

"I am pretty sure you never boarded here?"

"No." The man again shook his head.

"What *did* you do here when you were here before?" asked Pleasant. "For I don't remember you."

"It's not at all likely you should. I only stood at the door, one night—on the lower step there—while a shipmate of mine looked in to speak to your father. I remember the place well." Looking very curiously round it.

"Might that have been long ago?"

"Ay, a goodish bit ago. When I came off my last voyage."

"Then you have not been to sea lately?"

"No. Been in the sick bay since then, and been employed ashore."

"Then, to be sure, that accounts for your hands."

The man with a keen look, a quick smile, and a change of manner, caught her up. "You're a good observer. Yes. That accounts for my hands."

Pleasant was somewhat disquieted by his look, and returned it suspiciously. Not only was his change of manner, though very sudden, quite collected, but his former manner, which he resumed, had a certain suppressed confidence and sense of power in it that were half threatening.

"Will your father be long?" he inquired.

"I don't know. I can't say."

"As you supposed he was at home, it would seem that he has just gone out? How's that?"

"I supposed he had come home," Pleasant explained.

"Oh! You supposed he had come home? Then he has been some time out? How's that?"

"I don't want to deceive you. Father's on the river in his boat."

"At the old work?" asked the man.

"I don't know what you mean," said Pleasant, shrinking a step back. "What on earth d'ye want?"

"I don't want to hurt your father. I don't want to say I might, if I chose. I want to speak to him. Not much in that, is there? There shall be no secrets from you; you shall be by. And plainly, Miss Riderhood, there's nothing to be got out of me, or made of me. I am not good for the Leaving Shop, I am not good for the Boarding-House, I am not good for anything in your way to the extent of sixpenn'orth of halfpence. Put the idea aside, and we shall get on together."

"But you're a seafaring man?" argued Pleasant, as if that were a sufficient reason for his being good for something in her way.

"Yes and no. I have been, and I may be again. But I am not for you. Won't you take my word for it?"

The conversation had arrived at a crisis to justify Miss Pleasant's hair in tumbling down. It tumbled down accordingly, and she twisted it up, looking from under her bent forehead at the man. In taking stock of his familiarly worn rough-weather nautical clothes, piece by piece, she took stock of a formidable knife in a sheath at his waist ready to his hand, and of a whistle hanging round his neck, and of a short jagged knotted club with a loaded head that peeped out of a pocket of his loose outer jacket or frock. He sat quietly looking at her; but, with these appendages partially revealing themselves, and with a quantity of bristling oakum-colored head and whisker, he had a formidable appearance.

"Won't you take my word for it?" he asked again.

Pleasant answered with a short dumb nod. He rejoined with another short dumb nod. Then he got up and stood with his arms folded, in front of the fire, looking down into it occasionally, as she stood with her arms folded, leaning against the side of the chimney-piece.

"To wile away the time till your father comes," he said,—“pray is there much robbing and murdering of seamen about the water-side now?"

"No," said Pleasant.

"Any?"

"Complaints of that sort are sometimes made, about Ratcliffe and Wapping, and up that way. But who knows how many are true?"

"To be sure. And it don't seem necessary."

"That's what I say," observed Pleasant. "Where's the reason for it? Bless the sailors, it ain't as if they ever could keep what they have, without it."

"You're right. Their money may be soon got out of them, without violence," said the man.

"Of course it may," said Pleasant; "and then they ship again, and get more. And the best thing for 'em, too, to ship again as soon as ever they can be brought to it. They're never so well off as when they're afloat."

"I'll tell you why I ask," pursued the visitor, looking up from the fire. "I was once beset that way myself, and left for dead."

"No?" said Pleasant. "Where did it happen?"

"It happened," returned the man, with a ruminative air, as he drew his right hand across his chin, and dipped the other in the pocket of his rough outer coat, "it happened somewhere about here as I reckon. I don't think it can have been a mile from here."

"Were you drunk?" asked Pleasant.

"I was muddled, but not with fair drinking. I had not been drinking, you understand. A mouthful did it."

Pleasant with a grave look shook her head; importing that she understood the process, but decidedly disapproved.

"Fair trade is one thing," said she, "but that's another. No one has a right to carry on with Jack in *that* way."

"The sentiment does you credit," returned the man, with a grim smile; and added, in a mutter, "the more so, as I believe it's not your father's.—Yes, I had a bad time of it, that time. I lost everything, and had a sharp struggle for my life, weak as I was."

"Did you get the parties punished?" asked Pleasant.

"A tremendous punishment followed," said the man, more seriously; "but it was not of my bringing about."

"Of whose, then?" asked Pleasant.

The man pointed upward with his forefinger, and, slowly recovering that hand, settled his chin in it again as he looked at the fire. Bringing her inherited eye to bear upon him, Pleasant Riderhood felt more and more uncomfortable, his manner was so mysterious, so stern, so self-possessed.

"Anyways," said the damsel, "I am glad punishment followed, and I say so. Fair trade with seafaring men gets a bad name through deeds of violence. I am as much against deeds of violence being done to seafaring men, as seafaring men can be themselves. I am of the same opinion as my mother was, when she was living. Fair trade, my mother used to say, but no robbery and no blows." In the way of trade Miss Pleasant would have taken—and indeed did take when she could—as much as thirty shillings a week for board that would be dear at five, and likewise conducted the Leaving business upon correspondingly equitable principles; yet she had that tenderness of conscience and those feelings of humanity, that the moment her ideas of trade were overstepped, she became the seaman's champion, even against her father whom she seldom otherwise resisted.

But, she was here interrupted by her father's voice exclaiming angrily, "Now, Poll Parrot!" and by her father's hat being heavily flung from his hand and striking her face. Accustomed to such occasional manifestations of his sense of parental duty, Pleasant merely wiped her face on her hair (which of course had tumbled down) before she twisted it up. This was another common procedure on the part of the ladies of the Hole, when heated by verbal or fistic altercation.

"Blest if I believe such a Poll Parrot as you was ever learned to speak!" growled Mr. Riderhood, stooping to pick up his hat, and making a feint at her with his head and right elbow; for he took the delicate subject of robbing seamen in extraordinary dudgeon, and was out of humour too. "What are you Poll Parroting at now? Ain't you got nothing to do but fold your arms and stand a Poll Parroting all night?"

"Let her alone," urged the man. "She was only speaking to me."

"Let her alone too!" retorted Mr. Riderhood, eyeing him all over. "Do you know she's my daughter?"

"Yes."

"And don't you know that I won't have no Poll Parroting on the part of my daughter? No, nor yet that I won't take no Poll Parroting from no man? And who may *you* be, and what may *you* want?"

"How can I tell you until you are silent?" returned the other fiercely.

"Well," said Mr. Riderhood, quailing a little, "I am willing to be silent for the purpose of hearing. But don't Poll Parrot me."

"Are you thirsty, you?" the man asked, in the same fierce short way, after returning his look.

"Why nat'rally," said Mr. Riderhood, "ain't I always thirsty!" (Indignant at the absurdity of the question.)

"What will you drink?" demanded the man.

"Sherry wine," returned Mr. Riderhood, in the same sharp tone, "if you're capable of it."

The man put his hand in his pocket, took out half a sovereign, and begged the favour of Miss Pleasant that she would fetch a bottle. "With the cork undrawn," he added, emphatically, looking at her father.

"I'll take my Alfred David," muttered Mr. Riderhood, slowly relaxing into a dark smile, "that you know a move. Do *I* know *you*? N—n—no, I don't know you."

The man replied, "No, you don't know me." And so they stood looking at one another surlily enough, until Pleasant came back.

"There's small glasses on the shelf," said Riderhood to his daughter. "Give me the one without a foot. I gets my living by the sweat of my brow, and it's good enough for *me*." This had a modest self-denying appearance; but it soon turned out that as, by reason of the impossibility of standing the glass upright while there was anything in it, it required to be emptied as soon as filled, Mr. Riderhood managed to drink in the proportion of three to one.

With his Fortunatus's goblet ready in his hand, Mr. Riderhood sat down on one side of the table before the fire, and the strange man on the other: Pleasant occupying a stool between the latter and the fireside. The background, composed of handkerchiefs, coats, shirts, hats, and other old articles "On Leaving," had a general dim resemblance to human listeners; especially where a shiny black sou'-wester suit and hat hung, looking very like a clumsy mariner with his back to the company, who was so curious to overhear, that he paused for the purpose with his coat half pulled on, and his shoulders up to his ears in the uncompleted action.

The visitor first held the bottle against the light of the candle, and next examined the top of the cork. Satisfied that it had not been tampered with, he slowly took from his breastpocket a rusty clasp-knife, and, with a corkscrew in the handle, opened the wine. That done, he looked at the cork, unscrewed it from the corkscrew, laid each separately on the table, and, with the end of the sailor's knot of his neckerchief, dusted the inside of the neck of the bottle. All this with great deliberation.

At first Riderhood had sat with his footless glass extended at arm's length for filling, while the very deliberate stranger seemed absorbed in his preparations. But, gradually his arm reverted home to him, and his glass was lowered and lowered until he rested it upside down upon the table. By the same degrees his attention became concentrated on the knife. And now, as the man held out the bottle to fill all round, Riderhood stood up, leaned over the table to look closer at the knife, and stared from it to him.

"What's the matter?" asked the man.

"Why, I know that knife!" said Riderhood.

"Yes, I dare say you do."

He motioned to him to hold up his glass, and filled it. Riderhood emptied it to the last drop and began again.

"That there knife——"

"Stop," said the man, composedly. "I was going to drink to your daughter. Your health, Miss Riderhood."

"That knife was the knife of a seaman named George Radfoot."

"It was."

"That seaman was well bekknown to me."

"He was."

"What's come to him?"

"Death has come to him. Death came to him in an ugly shape. He looked," said the man, "very horrible after it."

"Arter what?" said Riderhood, with a frowning stare.

"After he was killed."

"Killed? Who killed him?"

Only answering with a shrug, the man filled the footless glass, and Riderhood emptied it: looking amazedly from his daughter to his visitor.

"You don't mean to tell a honest man——" he was recommencing with his empty glass in his hand, when his eye became fascinated by the stranger's outer coat. He leaned across the table to see it nearer, touched the sleeve, turned the cuff to look at the sleeve-lining (the man, in his perfect composure, offering not the least objection), and exclaimed, "It's my belief as this here coat was George Radfoot's too!"

"You are right. He wore it the last time you ever saw him, and the last time you ever will see him—in this world."

"It's my belief you mean to tell me to my face you killed him!" exclaimed Riderhood; but, nevertheless, allowing his glass to be filled again.

The man only answered with another shrug, and showed no symptom of confusion.

"Wish I may die if I know what to be up to with this chap!" said Riderhood, after staring at him, and tossing his last glassful down his throat. "Let's know what to make of you. Say something plain."

"I will," returned the other, leaning forward across the table, and speaking in a low impressive voice. "What a liar you are!"

The honest witness rose, and made as though he would fling his glass in the man's face. The man not wincing, and merely shaking his forefinger half knowingly, half menacingly, the piece of honesty thought better of it and sat down again, putting the glass down too.

"And when you went to that lawyer yonder in the Temple with that invented story," said the stranger, in an exasperatingly comfortable sort of confidence, "you might have had your strong suspicions of a friend of your own, you know. I think you had, you know."

"Me my suspicions? Of what friend?"

"Tell me again whose knife was this?" demanded the man.

"It was possessed by, and was the property of—him as I have made mention on," said Riderhood, stupidly evading the actual mention of the name.

"Tell me again whose coat was this?"

"That there article of clothing likewise belonged to, and was wore by—him as I have made mention on," was again the dull Old Bailey evasion.

"I suspect that you gave him the credit of the deed, and of keeping cleverly out of the way. But there was small cleverness in *his* keeping out of the way. The cleverness would have been, to have got back for one single instant to the light of the sun."

"Things is come to a pretty pass," growled Mr. Riderhood, rising to his feet, goaded to stand at bay, "when bullyers as is wearing dead men's clothes, and bullyers as is armed with dead men's knives, is to come into the houses of honest live men, getting their livings by the sweats of their brows, and is to make these here sort of charges with no rhyme and no reason, neither the one nor yet the other! Why should I have had my suspicions of him?"

"Because you knew him," replied the man; "because you had been one with him, and knew his real character under a fair outside; because on the night which you had afterwards reason to believe to be the very night of the murder, he came in here, within an hour of his having left his ship in the docks, and asked you in what lodgings he could find room. Was there no stranger with him?"

"I'll take my world-without-end everlasting Alfred David that you warn't with him," answered Riderhood. "You talk big, you do, but things look pretty black against yourself, to my thinking. You charge again' me that George Radfoot got lost sight of, and was no more thought of. What's that for a sailor? Why there's fifty such, out of sight and out of mind, ten times as long as him—through entering in different names, re-shipping when the out'ard voyage is made, and what not—a turning up to light every day about here, and no matter made of it. Ask my daughter. You could go on Poll Parroting enough with her, when I warn't come in: Poll Parrot a little with her on this pint. You and your suspicions of my suspicions of him! What are my suspicions of you? You tell me George Radfoot got killed. I ask you who done it and how you know it. You carry his knife and you wear his coat. I ask you how you come by 'em? Hand over that there bottle!" Here Mr. Riderhood appeared to labour under a virtuous delusion that it was his own property. "And you," he added, turning to his daughter, as he filled the footless glass, "if it warn't wasting good sherry wine on you, I'd chuck this at you, for Poll Parroting with this man. It's along of Poll Parroting that such like as him gets their suspicions, whereas I gets mine by arguement, and being nat'rally a honest man, and sweating away at the brow as a honest man ought." Here he filled the footless goblet again, and stood chewing one half of its contents and looking down into the other as he slowly rolled the wine about in the glass; while Pleasant, whose sympathetic hair had come down on her being apo-

strophised, rearranged it, much in the style of the tail of a horse when proceeding to market to be sold.

"Well? Have you finished?" asked the strange man.

"No," said Riderhood, "I ain't. Far from it. Now then! I want to know how George Radfoot come by his death, and how you come by his kit?"

"If you ever do know, you won't know now."

"And next I want to know," proceeded Riderhood "whether you mean to charge that what-you-may-call-it murder—"

"Harmon murder, father," suggested Pleasant.

"No Poll Parroting!" he vociferated, in return. "Keep your mouth shut!—I want to know, you sir, whether you charge that there crime on George Radfoot?"

"If you ever do know, you won't know now."

"Perhaps you done it yourself?" said Riderhood, with a threatening action.

"I alone know," returned the man, sternly shaking his head, "the mysteries of that crime. I alone know that your trumped-up story cannot possibly be true. I alone know that it must be altogether false, and that you must know it to be altogether false. I come here to-night to tell you so much of what I know, and no more."

Mr. Riderhood, with his crooked eye upon his visitor, meditated for some moments, and then refilled his glass, and tipped the contents down his throat in three tips.

"Shut the shop-door!" he then said to his daughter, putting the glass suddenly down. "And turn the key and stand by it! If you know all this, you sir," getting, as he spoke, between the visitor and the door, "why han't you gone to Lawyer Lightwood?"

"That, also, is alone known to myself," was the cool answer.

"Don't you know that, if you didn't do the deed, what you say you could tell is worth from five to ten thousand pound?" asked Riderhood.

"I know it very well, and when I claim the money you shall share it."

The honest man paused, and drew a little nearer to the visitor, and a little further from the door.

"I know it," repeated the man, quietly, "as well as I know that you and George Radfoot were one together in more than one dark business; and as well as I know that you, Roger Riderhood, conspired against an innocent man for blood-money; and as well as I know that I can—and that I swear I will!—give you up on both scores, and be the proof against you in my own person, if you defy me!"

"Father!" cried Pleasant, from the door. "Don't defy him! Give way to him! Don't get into more trouble, father!"

"Will you leave off a Poll Parroting, I ask you?" cried Mr. Riderhood, half beside himself between the two. Then, propitiatingly and crawlingly: "You sir! You han't said what you want of me. Is it fair, is it worthy of yourself, to talk of my defying you afore ever you say what you want of me?"

"I don't want much," said the man. "This accusation of yours

must not be left half made and half unmade. What was done for the blood-money must be thoroughly undone."

"Well; but Shipmate——"

"Dont call me Shipmate," said the man.

"Captain, then," urged Mr. Riderhood; "there! You won't object to Captain. It's a honorable title, and you fully look it. Captain! Ain't the man dead? Now I ask you fair. Ain't Gaffer dead?"

"Well," returned the other, with impatience, "yes, he is dead. What then?"

"Can words hurt a dead man, Captain? I only ask you fair."

"They can hurt the memory of a dead man, and they can hurt his living children. How many children had this man?"

"Meaning Gaffer, Captain?"

"Of whom else are we speaking?" returned the other, with a movement of his foot, as if Rogue Riderhood were beginning to sneak before him in the body as well as the spirit, and he spurned him off. "I have heard of a daughter, and a son. I ask for information; I ask *your* daughter; I prefer to speak to her. What children did Hexam leave?"

Pleasant, looking to her father for permission to reply, that honest man exclaimed with great bitterness:

"Why the devil don't you answer the Captain? You can Poll Parrot enough when you ain't wanted to Poll Parrot, you perwerse jade!"

Thus encouraged, Pleasant explained that there were only Lizzie, the daughter in question, and the youth. Both very respectable, she added.

"It is dreadful that any stigma should attach to them," said the visitor, whom the consideration rendered so uneasy that he rose, and paced to and fro, muttering, "Dreadful! Unforeseen? How could it be foreseen!" Then he stopped, and asked aloud: "Where do they live?"

Pleasant further explained that only the daughter had resided with the father at the time of his accidental death, and that she had immediately afterwards quitted the neighbourhood.

"I know that," said the man, "for I have been to the place they dwelt in, at the time of the inquest. Could you quietly find out for me where she lives now?"

Pleasant had no doubt she could do that. Within what time, did she think? Within a day. The visitor said that was well, and he would return for the information, relying on its being obtained. To this dialogue Riderhood had attended in silence, and he now obsequiously bespake the Captain.

"Captain! Mentioning them unfort'net words of mine respecting Gaffer, it is contrairily to be bore in mind that Gaffer always were a precious rascal, and that his line were a thieving line. Like-ways when I went to them two Governors, Lawyer Lightwood and the t'other Governor, with my information, I may have been a little over-eager for the cause of justice, or (to put it another way) a little over-stimulated by them feelings which rouses a man up, when a pot of money is going about, to get his hand into that pot of money for

his family's sake. Besides which, I think the wine of them two Governors was—I will not say a hocussed wine, but fur from a wine as was elthy for the mind. And there's another thing to be remembered, Captain. Did I stick to them words when Gaffer was no more, and did I say bold to them two Governors, 'Governors both, wot I informed I still inform; wot was took down I hold to'? No. I says, frank and open—no shuffling, mind you, Captain!—"I may have been mistook, I've been a thinking of it, it mayn't have been took down correct on this and that, and I won't swear to thick and thin, I'd rayther forfeit your good opinions than do it." And so far as I know," concluded Mr. Riderhood, by way of proof and evidence to character, "I *have* actiually forfeited the good opinions of several persons—even your own, Captain, if I understand your words—but I'd sooner do it than be forswore. There; if that's conspiracy, call me conspirator."

"You shall sign," said the visitor, taking very little heed of this oration, "a statement that it was all utterly false, and the poor girl shall have it. I will bring it with me for your signature, when I come again."

"When might you be expected, Captain?" inquired Riderhood, again dubiously getting between him and the door.

"Quite soon enough for you. I shall not disappoint you; don't be afraid."

"Might you be inclined to leave any name, Captain?"

"No, not at all. I have no such intention."

"'Shall' is summ'at of a hard word, Captain," urged Riderhood, still feebly dodging between him and the door, as he advanced. "When you say a man 'shall' sign this and that and t'other, Captain, you order him about in a grand sort of a way. Don't it seem so to yourself?"

The man stood still, and angrily fixed him with his eyes.

"Father, father!" entreated Pleasant, from the door, with her disengaged hand nervously trembling at her lips; "don't! Don't get into trouble any more!"

"Hear me out, Captain, hear me out! All I was wishing to mention, Captain, afore you took your departer," said the sneaking Mr. Riderhood, falling out of his path, "was, your handsome words relating to the reward."

"When I claim it," said the man, in a tone which seemed to leave some such words as "you dog," very distinctly understood, "you shall share it."

Looking stedfastly at Riderhood, he once more said in a low voice, this time with a grim sort of admiration of him as a perfect piece of evil, "What a liar you are!" and, nodding his head twice or thrice over the compliment, passed out of the shop. But, to Pleasant he said good-night kindly.

The honest man who gained his living by the sweat of his brow remained in a state akin to stupefaction, until the footless glass and the unfinished bottle conveyed themselves into his mind. From his mind he conveyed them into his hands, and so conveyed the last of the wine into his stomach. When that was done, he awoke to a clear perception that Poll Parroting was solely chargeable with what had

passed. Therefore, not to be remiss in his duty as a father, he threw a pair of sea-boots at Pleasant, which she ducked to avoid, and then cried, poor thing, using her hair for a pocket-handkerchief.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SOLO AND A DUETT.

THE wind was blowing so hard when the visitor came out at the shop-door into the darkness and dirt of Limehouse Hole, that it almost blew him in again. Doors were slamming violently, lamps were flickering or blown out, signs were rocking in their frames, the water of the kennels, wind-dispersed, flew about in drops like rain. Indifferent to the weather, and even preferring it to better weather for its clearance of the streets, the man looked about him with a scrutinizing glance. "Thus much I know," he murmured. "I have never been here since that night, and never was here before that night, but thus much I recognize. I wonder which way did we take when we came out of that shop. We turned to the right as I have turned, but I can recall no more. Did we go by this alley? Or down that little lane?"

He tried both, but both confused him equally, and he came straying back to the same spot. "I remember there were poles pushed out of upper windows on which clothes were drying, and I remember a low public-house, and the sound flowing down a narrow passage belonging to it of the scraping of a fiddle and the shuffling of feet. But here are all these things in the lane, and here are all these things in the alley. And I have nothing else in my mind but a wall, a dark doorway, a flight of stairs, and a room."

He tried a new direction, but made nothing of it; walls, dark doorways, flights of stairs and rooms, were too abundant. And, like most people so puzzled, he again and again described a circle, and found himself at the point from which he had begun. "This is like what I have read in narratives of escape from prison," said he, "where the little track of the fugitives in the night always seems to take the shape of the great round world, on which they wander; as if it were a secret law."

Here he ceased to be the oakum-headed, oakum-whiskered man on whom Miss Pleasant Riderhood had looked, and, allowing for his being still wrapped in a nautical overcoat, became as like that same lost wanted Mr. Julius Handford, as never man was like another in this world. In the breast of the coat he stowed the bristling hair and whisker, in a moment, as the favoring wind went with him down a solitary place that it had swept clear of passengers. Yet in that same moment he was the Secretary also, Mr. Boffin's Secretary. For John Rokesmith, too, was as like that same lost wanted Mr. Julius Handford as never man was like another in this world.

"I have no clue to the scene of my death," said he. "Not that it matters now. But having risked discovery by venturing here at all,

I should have been glad to track some part of the way." With which singular words he abandoned his search, came up out of Limehouse Hole, and took the way past Limehouse Church. At the great iron gate of the churchyard he stopped and looked in. He looked up at the high tower spectrally resisting the wind, and he looked round at the white tombstones, like enough to the dead in their winding-sheets, and he counted the nine tolls of the clock-bell.

"It is a sensation not experienced by many mortals," said he, "to be looking into a churchyard on a wild windy night, and to feel that I no more hold a place among the living than these dead do, and even to know that I lie buried somewhere else, as they lie buried here. Nothing uses me to it. A spirit that was once a man could hardly feel stranger or lonelier, going unrecognized among mankind, than I feel.

"But this is the fanciful side of the situation. It has a real side, so difficult that, though I think of it every day, I never thoroughly think it out. Now, let me determine to think it out as I walk home. I know I evade it, as many men—perhaps most men—do evade thinking their way through their greatest perplexity. I will try to pin myself to mine. Don't evade it, John Harmon; don't evade it; think it out!

"When I came back to England, attracted to the country with which I had none but most miserable associations, by the accounts of my fine inheritance that found me abroad, I came back, shrinking from my father's money, shrinking from my father's memory, mistrustful of being forced on a mercenary wife, mistrustful of my father's intention in thrusting that marriage on me, mistrustful that I was already growing avaricious, mistrustful that I was slackening in gratitude to the two dear noble honest friends who had made the only sunlight in my childish life or that of my heartbroken sister. I came back, timid, divided in my mind, afraid of myself and everybody here, knowing of nothing but wretchedness that my father's wealth had ever brought about. Now, stop, and so far think it out, John Harmon. Is that so? That is exactly so.

"On board serving as third mate was George Radfoot. I knew nothing of him. His name first became known to me about a week before we sailed, through my being accosted by one of the ship-agent's clerks as 'Mr. Radfoot.' It was one day when I had gone aboard to look to my preparations, and the clerk, coming behind me as I stood on deck, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, 'Mr. Radfoot, look here,' referring to some papers that he had in his hand. And my name first became known to Radfoot, through another clerk within a day or two, and while the ship was yet in port, coming up behind him, tapping him on the shoulder and beginning, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Harmon——.' I believe we were alike in bulk and stature but not otherwise, and that we were not strikingly alike, even in those respects, when we were together and could be compared.

"However, a sociable word or two on these mistakes became an easy introduction between us, and the weather was hot, and he helped me to a cool cabin on deck alongside his own, and his first school had

been at Brussels as mine had been, and he had learnt French as I had learnt it, and he had a little history of himself to relate—God only knows how much of it true, and how much of it false—that had its likeness to mine. I had been a seaman too. So we got to be confidential together, and the more easily yet, because he and every one on board had known by general rumour what I was making the voyage to England for. By such degrees and means, he came to the knowledge of my uneasiness of mind, and of its setting at that time in the direction of desiring to see and form some judgment of my allotted wife, before she could possibly know me for myself; also to try Mrs. Boffin and give her a glad surprise. So the plot was made out of our getting common sailors' dresses (as he was able to guide me about London), and throwing ourselves in Bella Wilfer's neighbourhood, and trying to put ourselves in her way, and doing whatever chance might favour on the spot, and seeing what came of it. If nothing came of it, I should be no worse off, and there would merely be a short delay in my presenting myself to Lightwood. I have all these facts right? Yes. They are all accurately right.

"His advantage in all this was, that for a time I was to be lost. It might be for a day or for two days, but I must be lost sight of on landing, or there would be recognition, anticipation, and failure. Therefore, I disembarked with my valise in my hand—as Potterson the steward and Mr. Jacob Kibble my fellow-passenger afterwards remembered—and waited for him in the dark by that very Limehouse Church which is now behind me.

"As I had always shunned the port of London, I only knew the church through his pointing out its spire from on board. Perhaps I might recall, if it were any good to try, the way by which I went to it alone from the river; but how we two went from it to Riderhood's shop, I don't know—any more than I know what turns we took and doubles we made, after we left it. The way was purposely confused, no doubt.

"But let me go on thinking the facts out, and avoid confusing them with my speculations. Whether he took me by a straight way or a crooked way, what is that to the purpose now? Steady, John Harmon.

"When we stopped at Riderhood's, and he asked that scoundrel a question or two, purporting to refer only to the lodging-houses in which there was accommodation for us, had I the least suspicion of him? None. Certainly none until afterwards when I held the clue. I think he must have got from Riderhood in a paper, the drug, or whatever it was, that afterwards stupefied me, but I am far from sure. All I felt safe in charging on him to-night, was old companionship in villainy between them. Their undisguised intimacy, and the character I now know Riderhood to bear, made that not at all adventurous. But I am not clear about the drug. Thinking out the circumstances on which I found my suspicion, they are only two. One: I remember his changing a small folded paper from one pocket to another, after we came out, which he had not touched before. Two: I now know Riderhood to have been previously taken up for being concerned in the robbery of an unlucky seaman, to whom some such poison had been given.

"It is my conviction that we cannot have gone a mile from that

shop, before we came to the wall, 'the dark doorway, the flight of stairs, and the room. The night was particularly dark and it rained hard. As I think the circumstances back, I hear the rain splashing on the stone pavement of the passage, which was not under cover. The room overlooked the river, or a dock, or a creek, and the tide was out. Being possessed of the time down to that point, I know by the hour that it must have been about low water; but while the coffee was getting ready, I drew back the curtain (a dark-brown curtain), and, looking out, knew by the kind of reflection below, of the few neighbouring lights, that they were reflected in tidal mud.

"He had carried under his arm a canvas bag, containing a suit of his clothes. I had no change of outer clothes with me, as I was to buy slops. 'You are very wet, Mr. Harmon,'—I can hear him saying—'and I am quite dry under this good waterproof coat. Put on these clothes of mine. You may find on trying them that they will answer your purpose to-morrow, as well as the slops you mean to buy, or better. While you change, I'll hurry the hot coffee.' When he came back, I had his clothes on, and there was a black man with him, wearing a linen jacket, like a steward, who put the smoking coffee on the table in a tray and never looked at me. I am so far literal and exact? Literal and exact, I am certain.

"Now, I pass to sick and deranged impressions; they are so strong, that I rely upon them; but there are spaces between them that I know nothing about, and they are not pervaded by any idea of time.

"I had drank some coffee, when to my sense of sight he began to swell immensely, and something urged me to rush at him. We had a struggle near the door. He got from me, through my not knowing where to strike, in the whirling round of the room, and the flashing of flames of fire between us. I dropped down. Lying helpless on the ground, I was turned over by a foot. I was dragged by the neck into a corner. I heard men speak together. I was turned over by other feet. I saw a figure like myself lying dressed in my clothes on a bed. What might have been, for anything I knew, a silence of days, weeks, months, years, was broken by a violent wrestling of men all over the room. The figure like myself was assailed, and my valise was in its hand. I was trodden upon and fallen over. I heard a noise of blows, and thought it was a wood-cutter cutting down a tree. I could not have said that my name was John Harmon—I could not have thought it—I didn't know it—but when I heard the blows, I thought of the wood-cutter and his axe, and had some dead idea that I was lying in a forest.

"This is still correct? Still correct, with the exception that I cannot possibly express it to myself without using the word I. But it was not I. There was no such thing as I, within my knowledge.

"It was only after a downward slide through something like a tube, and then a great noise and a sparkling and crackling as of fires, that the consciousness came upon me, 'This is John Harmon drowning! John Harmon, struggle for your life. John Harmon, call on Heaven and save yourself!' I think I cried it out aloud in a great agony, and then a heavy horrid unintelligible something vanished, and it was I who was struggling there alone in the water.

"I was very weak and faint, frightfully oppressed with drowsiness, and driving fast with the tide. Looking over the black water, I saw the lights racing past me on the two banks of the river, as if they were eager to be gone and leave me dying in the dark. The tide was running down, but I knew nothing of up or down then. When, guiding myself safely with Heaven's assistance before the fierce set of the water, I at last caught at a boat moored, one of a tier of boats at a causeway, I was sucked under her, and came up, only just alive, on the other side.

"Was I long in the water? Long enough to be chilled to the heart, but I don't know how long. Yet the cold was merciful, for it was the cold night air and the rain that restored me from a swoon on the stones of the causeway. They naturally supposed me to have toppled in, drunk, when I crept to the public-house it belonged to; for I had no notion where I was, and could not articulate—through the poison that had made me insensible having affected my speech—and I supposed the night to be the previous night, as it was still dark and raining. But I had lost twenty-four hours.

"I have checked the calculation often, and it must have been two nights that I lay recovering in that public-house. Let me see. Yes. I am sure it was while I lay in that bed there, that the thought entered my head of turning the danger I had passed through, to the account of being for some time supposed to have disappeared mysteriously, and of proving Bella. The dread of our being forced on one another, and perpetuating the fate that seemed to have fallen on my father's riches—the fate that they should lead to nothing but evil—was strong upon the moral timidity that dates from my childhood with my poor sister.

"As to this hour I cannot understand that side of the river where I recovered the shore, being the opposite side to that on which I was ensnared, I shall never understand it now. Even at this moment, while I leave the river behind me, going home, I cannot conceive that it rolls between me and that spot, or that the sea is where it is. But this is not thinking it out; this is making a leap to the present time.

"I could not have done it, but for the fortune in the waterproof belt round my body. Not a great fortune, forty and odd pounds for the inheritor of a hundred and odd thousand! But it was enough. Without it I must have disclosed myself. Without it, I could never have gone to that Exchequer Coffee House, or taken Mrs. Wilfer's lodgings.

"Some twelve days I lived at that hotel, before the night when I saw the corpse of Radfoot at the Police Station. The inexpressible mental horror that I laboured under, as one of the consequences of the poison, makes the interval seem greatly longer, but I know it cannot have been longer. That suffering has gradually weakened and weakened since, and has only come upon me by starts, and I hope I am free from it now; but even now, I have sometimes to think, constrain myself, and stop before speaking, or I could not say the words I want to say.

"Again I ramble away from thinking it out to the end. It is not so far to the end that I need be tempted to break off. Now, on straight!

"I examined the newspapers every day for tidings that I was

missing, but saw none. Going out that night to walk (for I kept retired while it was light), I found a crowd assembled round a placard posted at Whitehall. It described myself, John Harmon, as found dead and mutilated in the river under circumstances of strong suspicion, described my dress, described the papers in my pockets, and stated where I was lying for recognition. In a wild incautious way I hurried there, and there—with the horror of the death I had escaped, before my eyes in its most appalling shape, added to the inconceivable horror tormenting me at that time when the poisonous stuff was strongest on me—I perceived that Radfoot had been murdered by some unknown hands for the money for which he would have murdered me, and that probably we had both been shot into the river from the same dark place into the same dark tide, when the stream ran deep and strong.

“That night I almost gave up my mystery, though I suspected no one, could offer no information, knew absolutely nothing save that the murdered man was not I, but Radfoot. Next day while I hesitated, and next day while I hesitated, it seemed as if the whole country were determined to have me dead. The Inquest declared me dead, the Government proclaimed me dead; I could not listen at my fireside for five minutes to the outer noises, but it was borne into my ears that I was dead.

“So John Harmon died, and Julius Handford disappeared, and John Rokesmith was born. John Rokesmith’s intent to-night has been to repair a wrong that he could never have imagined possible, coming to his ears through the Lightwood talk related to him, and which he is bound by every consideration to remedy. In that intent John Rokesmith will persevere, as his duty is.

“Now, is it all thought out? All to this time? Nothing omitted? No, nothing. But beyond this time? To think it out through the future, is a harder though a much shorter task than to think it out through the past. John Harmon is dead. Should John Harmon come to life?

“If yes, why? If no, why?”

“Take yes, first. To enlighten human Justice concerning the offence of one far beyond it who may have a living mother. To enlighten it with the lights of a stone passage, a flight of stairs, a brown window-curtain, and a black man. To come into possession of my father’s money, and with it sordidly to buy a beautiful creature whom I love—I cannot help it; reason has nothing to do with it; I love her against reason—but who would as soon love me for my own sake, as she would love the beggar at the corner. What a use for the money, and how worthy of its old misuses!

“Now, take no. The reasons why John Harmon should not come to life. Because he has passively allowed these dear old faithful friends to pass into possession of the property. Because he sees them happy with it, making a good use of it, effacing the old rust and tarnish on the money. Because they have virtually adopted Bella, and will provide for her. Because there is affection enough in her nature, and warmth enough in her heart, to develop into something enduringly good, under favorable conditions. Because her

faults have been intensified by her place in my father's will, and she is already growing better. Because her marriage with John Harmon, after what I have heard from her own lips, would be a shocking mockery, of which both she and I must always be conscious, and which would degrade her in her mind, and me in mine, and each of us in the other's. Because if John Harmon comes to life and does not marry her, the property falls into the very hands that hold it now.

"What would I have? Dead, I have found the true friends of my lifetime still as true as tender and as faithful as when I was alive, and making my memory an incentive to good actions done in my name. Dead, I have found them when they might have slighted my name, and passed greedily over my grave to ease and wealth, lingering by the way, like single-hearted children, to recall their love for me when I was a poor frightened child. Dead, I have heard from the woman who would have been my wife if I had lived, the revolting truth that I should have purchased her, caring nothing for me, as a Sultan buys a slave.

"What would I have? If the dead could know, or do know, how the living use them, who among the hosts of dead has found a more disinterested fidelity on earth than I? Is not that enough for me? If I had come back, these noble creatures would have welcomed me, wept over me, given up everything to me with joy. I did not come back, and they have passed unspoiled into my place. Let them rest in it, and let Bella rest in hers.

"What course for me then? This. To live the same quiet Secretary life, carefully avoiding chances of recognition, until they shall have become more accustomed to their altered state, and until the great swarm of swindlers under many names shall have found newer prey. By that time, the method I am establishing through all the affairs, and with which I will every day take new pains to make them both familiar, will be, I may hope, a machine in such working order as that they can keep it going. I know I need but ask of their generosity, to have. When the right time comes, I will ask no more than will replace me in my former path of life, and John Rokesmith shall tread it as contentedly as he may. But John Harmon shall come back no more.

"That I may never, in the days to come afar off, have any weak misgiving that Bella might, in any contingency, have taken me for my own sake if I had plainly asked her, I *will* plainly ask her: proving beyond all question what I already know too well. And now it is all thought out, from the beginning to the end, and my mind is easier."

So deeply engaged had the living-dead man been, in thus communing with himself, that he had regarded neither the wind nor the way, and had resisted the former as instinctively as he had pursued the latter. But being now come into the City, where there was a coach-stand, he stood irresolute whether to go to his lodgings, or to go first to Mr. Boffin's house. He decided to go round by the house, arguing, as he carried his overcoat upon his arm, that it was less

likely to attract notice if left there, than if taken to Holloway: both Mrs. Wilfer and Miss Lavinia being ravenously curious touching every article of which the lodger stood possessed.

Arriving at the house, he found that Mr. and Mrs. Boffin were out, but that Miss Wilfer was in the drawing-room. Miss Wilfer had remained at home, in consequence of not feeling very well, and had inquired in the evening if Mr. Rokesmith were in his room.

"Make my compliments to Miss Wilfer, and say I am here now."

Miss Wilfer's compliments came down in return, and, if it were not too much trouble, would Mr. Rokesmith be so kind as to come up before he went?

It was not too much trouble, and Mr. Rokesmith came up.

Oh she looked very pretty, she looked very, very pretty! If the father of the late John Harmon had but left his money unconditionally to his son, and if his son had but lighted on this loveable girl for himself, and had the happiness to make her loving as well as loveable!

"Dear me! Are you not well, Mr. Rokesmith?"

"Yes, quite well. I was sorry to hear, when I came in, that *you* were not."

"A mere nothing. I had a headache—gone now—and was not quite fit for a hot theatre, so I stayed at home. I asked you if you were not well, because you look so white."

"Do I? I have had a busy evening."

She was on a low ottoman before the fire, with a little shining jewel of a table, and her book and her work, beside her. Ah! what a different life the late John Harmon's, if it had been his happy privilege to take his place upon that ottoman, and draw his arm about that waist, and say, "I hope the time has been long without me? What a Home Goddess you look, my darling!"

But, the present John Rokesmith, far removed from the late John Harmon, remained standing at a distance. A little distance in respect of space, but a great distance in respect of separation.

"Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, taking up her work, and inspecting it all round the corners, "I wanted to say something to you when I could have the opportunity, as an explanation why I was rude to you the other day. You have no right to think ill of me, sir."

The sharp little way in which she darted a look at him, half sensitively injured, and half pettishly, would have been very much admired by the late John Harmon.

"You don't know how well I think of you, Miss Wilfer."

"Truly you must have a very high opinion of me, Mr. Rokesmith, when you believe that in prosperity I neglect and forget my old home."

"Do I believe so?"

"You *did*, sir, at any rate," returned Bella.

"I took the liberty of reminding you of a little omission into which you had fallen—insensibly and naturally fallen. It was no more than that."

"And I beg leave to ask you, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, "why you took that liberty?—I hope there is no offence in the phrase; it is your own, remember."

"Because I am truly, deeply, profoundly interested in you, Miss Wilfer. Because I wish to see you always at your best. Because I—shall I go on?"

"No, sir," returned Bella, with a burning face, "you have said more than enough. I beg that you will *not* go on. If you have any generosity, any honor, you will say no more."

The late John Harmon, looking at the proud face with the down-cast eyes, and at the quick breathing as it stirred the fall of bright brown hair over the beautiful neck, would probably have remained silent.

"I wish to speak to you, sir," said Bella, "once for all, and I don't know how to do it. I have sat here all this evening, wishing to speak to you, and determining to speak to you, and feeling that I must. I beg for a moment's time."

He remained silent, and she remained with her face averted, sometimes making a slight movement as if she would turn and speak. At length she did so.

"You know how I am situated here, sir, and you know how I am situated at home. I must speak to you for myself, since there is no one about me whom I could ask to do so. It is not generous in you, it is not honorable in you, to conduct yourself towards me as you do."

"Is it ungenerous or dishonorable to be devoted to you; fascinated by you?"

"Preposterous!" said Bella.

The late John Harmon might have thought it rather a contemptuous and lofty word of repudiation.

"I now feel obliged to go on," pursued the Secretary, "though it were only in self-explanation and self-defence. I hope, Miss Wilfer, that it is not unpardonable—even in me—to make an honest declaration of an honest devotion to you."

"An honest declaration!" repeated Bella, with emphasis.

"Is it otherwise?"

"I must request, sir," said Bella, taking refuge in a touch of timely resentment, "that I may not be questioned. You must excuse me if I decline to be cross-examined."

"Oh, Miss Wilfer, this is hardly charitable. I ask you nothing but what your own emphasis suggests. However, I waive even that question. But what I have declared, I take my stand by. I cannot recall the avowal of my earnest and deep attachment to you, and I do not recall it."

"I reject it, sir," said Bella.

"I should be blind and deaf if I were not prepared for the reply. Forgive my offence, for it carries its punishment with it."

"What punishment?" asked Bella.

"Is my present endurance none? But excuse me; I did not mean to cross-examine you again."

"You take advantage of a hasty word of mine," said Bella with a little sting of self-reproach, "to make me seem—I don't know what. I spoke without consideration when I used it. If that was bad, I am sorry; but you repeat it after consideration, and that seems to me to be at least no

better. For the rest, I beg it may be understood, Mr. Rokesmith, that there is an end of this between us, now and for ever."

"Now and for ever," he repeated.

"Yes. I appeal to you, sir," proceeded Bella with increasing spirit, "not to pursue me. I appeal to you not to take advantage of your position in this house to make my position in it distressing and disagreeable. I appeal to you to discontinue your habit of making your misplaced attentions as plain to Mrs. Boffin as to me."

"Have I done so?"

"I should think you have," replied Bella. "In any case it is not your fault if you have not, Mr. Rokesmith."

"I hope you are wrong in that impression. I should be very sorry to have justified it. I think I have not. For the future there is no apprehension. It is all over."

"I am much relieved to hear it," said Bella. "I have far other views in life, and why should you waste your own?"

"Mine!" said the Secretary. "My life!"

His curious tone caused Bella to glance at the curious smile with which he said it. It was gone as he glanced back. "Pardon me, Miss Wilfer," he proceeded, when their eyes met; "you have used some hard words, for which I do not doubt you have a justification in your mind, that I do not understand. Ungenerous and dishonorable. In what?"

"I would rather not be asked," said Bella, haughtily looking down.

"I would rather not ask, but the question is imposed upon me. Kindly explain; or if not kindly, justly."

"Oh, sir!" said Bella, raising her eyes to his, after a little struggle to forbear, "is it generous and honorable to use the power here which your favor with Mr. and Mrs. Boffin and your ability in your place give you, against me?"

"Against you?"

"Is it generous and honorable to form a plan for gradually bringing their influence to bear upon a suit which I have shown you that I do not like, and which I tell you that I utterly reject?"

The late John Harmon could have borne a good deal, but he would have been cut to the heart by such a suspicion as this.

"Would it be generous and honorable to step into your place—if you did so, for I don't know that you did, and I hope you did not—anticipating, or knowing beforehand, that I should come here, and designing to take me at this disadvantage?"

"This mean and cruel disadvantage," said the Secretary.

"Yes," assented Bella.

The Secretary kept silence for a little while; then merely said, "You are wholly mistaken, Miss Wilfer; wonderfully mistaken. I cannot say, however, that it is your fault. If I deserve better things of you, you do not know it."

"At least, sir," retorted Bella, with her old indignation rising, "you know the history of my being here at all. I have heard Mr. Boffin say that you are master of every line and word of that will, as you are master of all his affairs. And was it not enough that I

should have been willed away, like a horse, or a dog, or a bird; but must you too begin to dispose of me in your mind, and speculate in me, as soon as I had ceased to be the talk and the laugh of the town? Am I for ever to be made the property of strangers?"

"Believe me," returned the Secretary, "you are wonderfully mistaken."

"I should be glad to know it," answered Bella.

"I doubt if you ever will. Good-night. Of course I shall be careful to conceal any traces of this interview from Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, as long as I remain here. Trust me, what you have complained of is at an end for ever."

"I am glad I have spoken, then, Mr. Rokesmith. It has been painful and difficult, but it is done. If I have hurt you, I hope you will forgive me. I am inexperienced and impetuous, and I have been a little spoilt; but I really am not so bad as I dare say I appear, or as you think me."

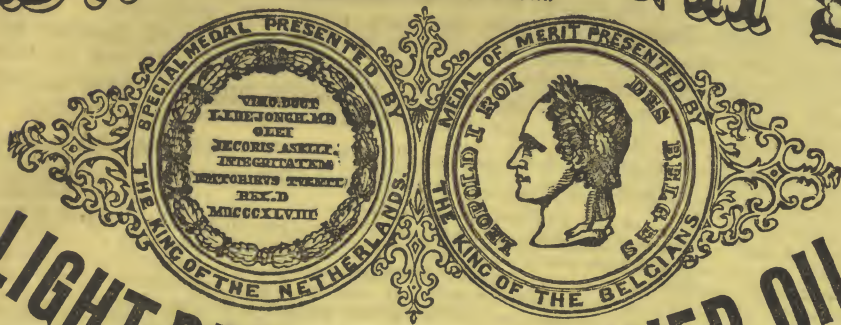
He quitted the room when Bella had said this, relenting in her wilful inconsistent way. Left alone, she threw herself back on her ottoman, and said, "I didn't know the lovely woman was such a Dragon!" Then, she got up and looked in the glass, and said to her image, "You have been positively swelling your features, you little fool!" Then, she took an impatient walk to the other end of the room and back, and said, "I wish Pa was here to have a talk about an avaricious marriage; but he is better away, poor dear, for I know I should pull his hair if he *was* here." And then she threw her work away, and threw her book after it, and sat down and hummed a tune, and hummed it out of tune, and quarrelled with it.

And John Rokesmith, what did he?

He went down to his room, and buried John Harmon many additional fathoms deep. He took his hat, and walked out, and, as he went to Holloway or anywhere else—not at all minding where—heaped mounds upon mounds of earth over John Harmon's grave. His walking did not bring him home until the dawn of day. And so busy had he been all night, piling and piling weights upon weights of earth above John Harmon's grave, that by that time John Harmon lay buried under a whole Alpine range; and still the Sexton Rokesmith accumulated mountains over him, lightening his labour with the dirge, "Cover him, crush him, keep him down!"

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Merrion Square, Dublin, Sept. 6, 1860.

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8, Savile Row, W., Aug. 1, 1859.

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1, Curzon Street, May Fair, Jan. 7, 1856.

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FIRE LIFE
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37 CORNHILL.

47 GEORGE STREET.

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Established 1824.

Capital £5,000,000.

GOVERNOR.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF HAMILTON & BRANDON.

INVESTED FUNDS at 1st August 1864, upwards of £900,000

ANNUAL REVENUE from all sources . . . 194,000

AMOUNT OF LIFE INSURANCES in force 3,300,000

THE FORTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the SCOTTISH UNION INSURANCE COMPANY was held in the Company's Office, No. 47 George Street, Edinburgh, on *Wednesday the 7th day of December 1864.*

THE REPORT by the DIRECTORS, containing full and detailed Statements of the Company's Transactions for the year ending 1st of August last, was submitted to the Proprietors, and unanimously approved of.

A REPORT by ROBERT SPOTTISWOODE, Esq., C.A., Auditor of the Company, certifying the accuracy of the Balance-Sheets, and other Financial Statements submitted by the Directors, was read to the Meeting.

SCOTTISH UNION INSURANCE COMPANY.

FROM the DIRECTORS' REPORT it appeared that during the year ending 1st August 1864,

The number of Life Policies issued was	. . .	1116
Sums insured thereby, deducting re-assurances	£514,425	
Yielding of New Premiums	17,039	

In the LIFE DEPARTMENT, after payment of all Claims, Sums paid for Surrender of Policies, Commission to Agents, including Expenses attending District Agencies and Charges for Management, the Excess of Receipts over Expenditure for the year was £28,030:7:8. This sum has been added to the Life Funds, which now amount to £569,686:2:6.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The FIRE REVENUE amounted to £54,089:2:10; and after payment of all Fire Losses, Commission to Agents, and charges, the surplus on the Fire Account alone, exclusive of interest, was £19,441:13:10. The interest received during the year on the Paid-up Capital and Sinking Fund was £13,020:0:10.

DIVIDEND.

A DIVIDEND out of the General Profits of the Company, at the rate of 10 per cent per annum, was declared payable to the Shareholders, free of Income-tax, on the 2d day of January 1865, after payment of which there remained a sum of £11,704:12:8 to be added to the rest, which now amounts to £102,093:8:5. In future the Dividends will be payable half-yearly, on 1st July and 2d January.

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY.

The following Statements exhibit the Progress which has taken place in the Company's Business, in their Departments, during the last few years.

Life Department.

For the Year Ending 31st July.	Number of New Life Policies issued.	Insuring	Yielding of New Premiums.
1862	915	£427,330	£13,197 9 1
1863	1071	488,264	15,382 1 0
1864	1116	514,425	17,039 1 6

It thus appears that, during the three years since 31st July 1861, forming the commencement of the current quinquennial period, there have been issued 3102 Life Policies, insuring the large sum of £1,430,019.

SCOTTISH UNION INSURANCE COMPANY.

Fire Department.

In this branch of the Company's Business the Revenue has increased upwards of **50** per cent during the last seven years, and now amounts to **£54,000**.

The Revenue of the Company from all sources is now **£194,000**, and has been derived from Business transacted in the United Kingdom alone — the Company not having any Foreign Agencies. When this fact is kept in view, as well as the active competition existing among Insurance Companies, it cannot but be regarded as very satisfactory that this Company has not only maintained, but has largely increased its Business and Revenue during the past year.

DIVISION OF PROFITS.

EVERY five years each Policy-holder entitled to participate receives a share of the surplus in exact proportion to the Premiums paid during the five years, with accumulated interest thereon. The share of Profits so allocated is then converted into a Reversionary Bonus, according to the age of the party.

While this system gives to each an exact proportion, it will be found alike favourable to young lives, whose prospects of longevity are greater, and to parties entering at middle life, or the more advanced ages; the Premiums paid by them being higher than at earlier ages.

BONUSES

have been declared in 1841, 1846, 1851, 1856, and 1861. At the last Investigation in 1861 :—

A REVERSIONARY BONUS was allocated upon those Policies entitled to participate, in proportion to the Premiums paid during the five preceding years, varying from about one to upwards of one and a half per cent per annum on the sums assured, according to age and duration of the Policy.

The following **EXAMPLES OF BONUS ADDITIONS** *are taken from the Company's Books :—*

A Policy issued in 1834 for £4000, had increased at 1st August 1861 to the sum of	}	£5402 17 1
A Policy issued in 1836 for £5000, had increased at 1st August 1861 to the sum of		
A Policy issued in 1841 for £1000, had increased at 1st August 1861 to the sum of	}	1256 14 9

Bonus declared every five years, and may be applied, at the option of the Assured, in any of the following ways :—

- I. IT MAY BE ADDED TO THE SUM ASSURED;
- II. APPLIED IN REDUCTION OF FUTURE PREMIUMS; OR
- III. SURRENDERED FOR ITS PRESENT VALUE IN CASH.

The next Declaration of Bonus will be in 1866.

SCOTTISH UNION INSURANCE COMPANY.

Claims are paid within Three Months after satisfactory evidence is produced of the death of the party insured. This Company, since its commencement, has paid upwards of £1,500,000 for Fire and Life Claims.

No Entry-Money. Policy Stamps paid by the Company.

Liberal Allowance for Surrender of Policies after three Premiums have been paid.

No extra Premium charged for residence in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, or the United States of America north of the 38th degree of latitude.

Policies may, under certain conditions and exceptions, after five years' endurance, be made indisputable, and the Assured permitted to travel or reside beyond the limits of Europe, without payment of Extra Premium.

TABLE of RATES for Insuring £100, payable at death.

Age next Birthday,	ANNUAL PREMIUM.		Age next Birthday.	ANNUAL PREMIUM.	
	With Profits.	Without Profits.		With Profits.	Without Profits.
20	£1 18 5	£1 12 11	38	£3 1 6	£2 13 9
21	1 19 7	1 13 7	39	3 3 3	2 15 5
22	2 0 9	1 14 5	40	3 5 0	2 17 2
23	2 1 11	1 15 2	41	3 6 10	2 18 11
24	2 3 1	1 16 1	42	3 8 9	3 0 8
25	2 4 3	1 17 0	43	3 10 10	3 2 5
26	2 5 4	1 18 0	44	3 12 11	3 4 4
27	2 6 5	1 19 0	45	3 15 1	3 6 4
28	2 7 7	2 0 0	46	3 17 5	3 8 7
29	2 8 9	2 1 2	47	3 19 10	3 10 11
30	2 9 11	2 2 4	48	4 2 5	3 13 6
31	2 11 2	2 3 7	49	4 5 0	3 16 5
32	2 12 6	2 4 11	50	4 7 9	3 19 8
33	2 13 10	2 6 3	52	4 16 7	4 7 0
34	2 15 3	2 7 9	54	5 4 10	4 15 4
35	2 16 9	2 9 1	56	5 14 0	5 4 6
36	2 18 3	2 10 7	58	6 4 4	5 13 8
37	2 19 10	2 12 1	60	6 15 9	6 3 4

Prospectuses, Forms of Proposal, and all information, may be had at the Offices of the Company in Edinburgh, London, or Dublin, or from any of the Agents.

GEORGE RAMSAY, *Manager.* JAMES BARLAS, *Secretary.*

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FIRE AND MARINE

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Reserve fund \$500,000
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in various cities throughout Canada
and the United States. The company
has a long history of successful
operation and is well known for its
reliability and financial strength.

ASTRA CASTRA

EXPERIMENTS AND ADVENTURES

IN

THE ATMOSPHERE.

BY

HATTON TURNOR,

OF THE PRINCE CONSORT'S OWN RIFLE BRIGADE.

THE Author has endeavoured to do justice to the ubiquity and importance of a subject which must in some degree be of great interest to all, for the medium which forms the basis of his work is the air, in which we all "live and move, and have our being."

The discoveries and inventions relating to the uses which have hitherto been made of the atmosphere, and the mathematical deductions which so clearly teach us to hope for the practicability of an aerial navigation, have never yet been described in a manner worthy of the lives hitherto sacrificed in unavailing attempts, nor of the confidence in ultimate success with which those are now inspired, who have patiently and laboriously considered the question in a mathematical and scientific point of view.

Public attention has been recently aroused from the lethargy of "hope deferred," by the experiments of Mr. Coxwell, one of the boldest pioneers of the science of acrostation, when, assisted by Mr. Glaisher, the eminent Meteorologist, he made an ascent which was thus mentioned in a leading article of the 'Times,' on the 11th of September, 1862.

"It deserves to take its place among the unparalleled junctures, and the critical and striking moments of war, politics, or discovery;" and again—"The courage of the men of science deserves to have a chapter of history devoted to it."

Acrostation may, indeed, be well considered as that branch of science, which displays the largest amount of physical courage in its professors.

The Author trusts that when full publicity shall have been given to the comparative rarity of accidents, and the causes whence they have arisen, many persons may be induced to avail themselves of that enjoyment of nature, from which so many are now deterred by the apprehension of personal danger. Schiller says of Columbus—

“With Genius, Nature ever stands in solemn union still,
And ever what the one foretells, the other shall fulfil.”

May this prove true of the assertion that we *shall eventually* bring into useful subjection all the atmospheric currents, which for the present baffle our attempts to subdue or control them! and if any means should hereafter be found for rendering the science of aerial navigation practically and generally useful, how apt would then be the following quotation from Milton:—

“Th’ invention all admir’d, and each, how he
To be th’ inventor miss’d; so easy ’t seem’d
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
Impossible!”

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BEDSTEADS, of Iron, Brass, and various Woods, and superior Bedding and Mattresses of all kinds. Four Show-rooms, each 120 feet long, are devoted to this department.

PLATE GLASS, Carving and Gilding.

GALLERY OF BRONZES d'ART, and dépôt for the Productions of F. BARBEDIENNE & Co., Paris; Clocks, Candelabra, Vases, and Ornamental Porcelain.

The Public are thus enabled to select their Paper Hangings or Decorations, Carpets, Curtains, and Furniture, all in harmony with each other, without the trouble and inconvenience of going to different houses.

29, 33, 34, 35, 37, and 38 OXFORD STREET,
PERRY'S PLACE, FRESTON PLACE,
AND NEWMAN YARD, ADJOINING.

Extract of the Report of the Jury of Class XXX (5751). JACKSON & GRAHAM, OXFORD STREET.

"We have already stated that the Furniture exhibited by Messrs. JACKSON and GRAHAM was, in a most special manner, distinguished by the International Jury. The great Sideboard in British Oak, decorated with figures, subjects, and attributes, is executed with rare perfection; and although there may be a little excess of richness in the composition, the workmanship is all that could be desired. The same remark applies to the great Wardrobe, inlaid with coloured wood, which is placed in the Nave at the back of the Sideboard; the columns and pilasters which separate the three divisions of this piece of furniture, are in good taste and of most careful execution.

"In the English Furniture Court they have exhibited several pieces of Furniture; one especially received admiration for the elegance and simplicity of its form, as well as for its perfect execution. It is a small Etagère, in ebony, inlaid with ivory, in quiet and perfect taste, and may serve as a model in the midst of that exuberance of richness without reason, which Furniture manufacturers so constantly produce. Another Cabinet, in ebony, enriched with gilt bronzes, accompanies the Etagère; the mountings are very well executed, but perhaps too rich for the Cabinet. A Drawing-room Decoration, with a chimney-piece finished with French bronzes, completes the important exhibition, TRULY WORTHY OF A HOUSE WHICH IN 1851 AND 1855 TOOK THE FIRST RANK IN PRODUCTION OF FURNITURE, AND CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS IN THE PRODUCTION OF ART AND GOOD TASTE."

The Furnishing of Bed-rooms.

HEAL and SON having observed for some time that it would be advantageous to their customers to see a much larger selection of Bed-room Furniture than is usually displayed, and that to judge properly of the style and effect of the different descriptions of Furniture, it is necessary that each description should be placed in separate rooms, have erected large and additional Show Rooms, by which they will be enabled not only to extend their show of Iron, Brass, and Wood Bedsteads, and Bed-room Furniture, beyond what they believe has ever been attempted; but also to provide several small rooms for the purpose of keeping complete suites of Bed-room Furniture in the different styles.

Japanned Deal Goods may be seen in complete suites of five or six different colours, some of them light and ornamental, and others of a plainer description. Suites of Stained Deal Gothic Furniture, Polished Deal, Oak, and Walnut, are also set apart in separate rooms, so that customers are able to see the effect as it would appear in their own rooms. A Suite of very superior Gothic Oak Furniture will generally be kept in stock, and from time to time new and select Furniture in various woods will be added.

Bed Furnitures are fitted to the Bedsteads in large numbers, so that a complete assortment may be seen, and the effect of any particular pattern ascertained as it would appear on the Bedstead.

A very large stock of Bedding (HEAL and SON's original trade) is placed on the BEDSTEADS.

The stock of Mahogany Goods for the better Bed-rooms, and Japanned Goods for plain and Servants' use, is very greatly increased. The entire Stock is arranged in eight rooms, six galleries, each 120 feet long, and two large ground floors, the whole forming as complete an assortment of Bed-room Furniture as they think can possibly be desired.

Every attention is paid to the manufacture of the Cabinet work; and they have just erected large Workshops on the premises for this purpose, that the manufacture may be under their own immediate care.

Their Bedding trade receives their constant and personal attention, every article being made on the premises.

They particularly call attention to their New Spring Mattress, the *Sommier Elastique Portatif*. It is portable, durable, and elastic, and lower in price than the old Spring Mattress.

HEAL AND SON'S

Illustrated Catalogue of Bedsteads, Bedding, and Bed-room Furniture sent Free by Post.

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